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SERMON XIII.

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THE LAST ENEMY DESTROYED.

"The last enemy which shall be destroyed is Death."—1 COR. 15: 26.

I HAVE heard of an ancient king, whose slave, always in attendance on his person, had it for his duty every morning to enter his master's room, no matter what he was doing, and call out aloud: "Philip, remember thou must die." Did not experience constantly teach us how insensible men, albeit living in a world in which Death's empire is universal, are to the fact of their mortality, we might be inclined to regard this quaint device of the king as altogether useless. When we think how often it is said, "he" or "she," whom we know, "is dead," there would seem to be no need of artificial expedients to jog the memory and call our

attention to the insecurity of the breath in our nostrils. But every man believes every man mortal except himself. We admit in our creed,

"All that live must die,
Passing through nature to eternity."

Nobody knows when. The hand which now writes these words may be cold and stiff before the sheets are filled. Yet who can say that the danger of going down quick into the pit has the distinctness and force of a reality to his feelings? Who can realize the hearse standing by his own door, the undertaker screwing the cover down over his own coffin, and the grave-digger rounding up the fresh earth over his own grave?

My friends, death has been unusually busy among us lately. Some of our prominent and most useful citizens have fallen. One of this congregation, whose place was in that pew, and who was always in his place, a respectful and attentive hearer of the word, has been snatched out of our sight into the dark, and we shall not see his face there any more. Lucius Franklin Robinson, Esq., in the prime and vigor of life, with a young family, friendships, wealth, reputation, and a future bright with promise; withal a pure, generous, Christian character, we are glad to believe; a man who had, in short, every thing to make him wish to live, and who was every thing which made his living among us, a thing most earnestly desired, is gone; wrenched suddenly out of his place by the force of a malignant disease, and hurried down to the dead. "Man being in honor abideth not." "The beauty of Israel is slain on our high places. How are the mighty fallen!" Let us weep in silence and step softly before the Lord!

I have thought that this was an apt time to consider that most common yet strange and terrible phenomenon, Death, and if I leave the path of sentiment for the path of intellectual inquiry, I trust I shall interest and profit you nothing the less.

The text stands in immediate connection with the writer's allusion to the resurrection of the dead at the second coming of Christ. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he have put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy which shall be destroyed is death." Bloomfield, in accordance with the best authorities, ancient and modern, renders the words, "And, last of all, the enemy Death is to be destroyed," and adds, "Now, as all enemies and obstacles are generally encountered in the order of difficulty, this suggests the idea of death being the most formidable enemy." It is to be further observed that death, though personified, is to be here understood as not only the event of dying but the state of being dead, the condition of souls before the resurrection, when the last enemy shall be destroyed.

I take these two points :

I. Death our most dreaded enemy.

II. How this last enemy is destroyed.

I. Death is an enemy : the last enemy. Nothing could better express the feeling of men. Death is terrible. He is the king of terrors. Men look upon death as an adversary to be hated and feared above all adversaries. The enmity of man towards death is universal and implacable. All men in all nations and ages have reluctated against this heavy fate, have hunted the realm of nature through for some promise of a resurrection, have always been unwilling to admit that their heroes and benefactors have become the prey of the grave. There is nothing agreeable in the idea of death. A stoical resignation to the dark fate is the best victory which we can gain over it. These statements are made apart from all connection with the overcoming power of faith in Christ. Christian experience mitigates some of the above statements, yet in the highest stages of Christian experience even, there is a sentiment of aversion to death, a sense of loss in separation from the body, a wish to escape it ; which that most spiritual and courageous of Christian soldiers, Paul, himself felt and expressed when he said, "Not for that we would be unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life:" an expression which we can understand only when we bear in mind the hope which the apostle, at first, seemed to entertain that he might not die, but live until the second coming of the Lord, when they that are alive shall be changed.

What is the cause of this dread of death ? Why is death such an enemy ? Passing by with a simple allusion to the obvious facts connected with the event of death which make it terrible ; as, for example, its inexorableness, bought off by no riches, or considerations of age, rank, or character, moved by no prayers or tears ; or its impartiality, entering the palace as easily as the hovel, bringing men in high places as well as low down to the same level in the dust ; or its stealthy approach, striking home in an unexpected hour ; or the destruction which it makes of schemes and purposes, and every budding promise ; or the physical suffering with which it is sometimes attended, and the more terrible havoc it makes of the tenderest affections, tearing through the vital ties of family and friendship, leaving them mangled and quivering in every part ; or lastly, the dread of the hereafter which attends the consciousness of guilt unquenched by the blood of Christ, making cowards of men, preventing them from welcoming death as an ally against "a sea of troubles," choosing rather to bear the ills they have than fly to others which they know not of : passing by all these obvious things, I say, I wish to call your attention to a fact which lies at the foundation of our aversion and

dread of death — this, namely, it is abnormal and violent. The separation of the soul from the body is an unnatural interruption of the course of existence, a thing which was not meant to be, which we feel ought not to be. Death is a stupendous intrusion upon the legitimate course of human development. It is connected with a deep moral disturbance, of which it is the fruit and sign. It is the consequence and punishment of sin. This abnormal and punitive character of death lies at the bottom of our aversion and dread of it.

But it may be said death is not a disturbance; on the contrary a thing quite in order. All living beings, sentient beings especially, are under the law of dissolution, which is the natural termination of their existence. If we regard man as a creature altogether in the sphere of nature, as being only the highest reach of natural life, it must be admitted that nothing is more in order than that he should die. Death is older than man upon the earth if the record in the rock is true. In the system of nature we conceive of no addition or subtraction; we have simply a process of evolution and involution. Individuals are only projections of the genus, standing as temporary manifestations of the species to which they belong, without any separate existence or independent significance. For a short period the development goes on, until the point of maturity is reached, then the individual life is caught by a contrary involving force, carried under and absorbed in the great whole. So the process goes on, birth and death succeeding each other, all the parts of matter passing in turn through the wonderful revolutions of life; yet nothing is added to or taken from the original sum of being. Over the realm of nature death has a lawful and undisputed empire. Here his presence is no intrusion. But man is exalted above all natural orders of beings, not only in degree but in kind. As Christians and philosophers we are prepared to disclaim, as degrading, the definition "nature's noblest animal," and claim for man a supernatural existence. Man is spirit. He is a person, having a separate and self-centered existence. The soul is not an evolution from already existing causes, according to the analogy of nature, but a new creation from the hand of God, an addition to the sum total of the universe. The spiritual monad, albeit one of a race, has an existence and significance independent of the race. It is, therefore, as an individual, immortal and imperishable. Now for an independent and immortal creature to come into any connection with death is something which can not be explained from the order of nature, because such a being is quite out of the conditions of nature. We should rather expect that whatever of the material the spirit might take up into organic and vital union with itself would live in partnership with it forever. The fact of the separation of the soul and body is something which we feel should not be, and would not have been but for the action of some inimical force.

We must not pass this point without alluding to a notion to which our opinion is in opposition: I mean the notion of the Platonists and some of the early Fathers in the Church, that the body is the prison of the soul. This doctrine was founded on a dualistic conception of the universe. Matter was regarded as an element hostile to God and spirit, but coeternal in its existence with God. It was explained by Plato as the consequence and punishment of sin committed in the pure spiritual state, that the soul now finds itself imprisoned in the contracted walls of the flesh, and compelled to see only shadows through the senses. The opinion is entertained by not a few Christians of the present day, that matter is a hindrance to the spirit, a clog on its wings, which weighs it down, and prevents it from reaching those heights of life which it would otherwise attain: death of the body being a real deliverance, devoutly to be wished for by a good man, as an introduction into a higher and freer sphere of conscious thought and activity. This notion, founded on the dualistic conception of the universe, which regards matter as an evil principle, and delights itself in the expectation of a purely spiritualistic immortality, can not stand, since it is in irreconcilable antagonism not only with the Biblical doctrine of God as the author of matter, all of which he pronounced very good, but also with the New Testament conception of the resurrection of the body, which is to be waited for in hope.

If we understand the account of the creation of man in Genesis, there is no intimation that the existence of the soul in a material body was a punishment of sin. On the contrary, we understand the body to be an original part of man, a means for the development of his spiritual powers. It is by this material organism that finite spirits have intercourse with each other, through which social intercourse, the manifold affections and capacities of the infant soul are unfolded and matured. We see this process of development in the education of every child, which feels its way gradually into the world and society by the senses, "the inward service of the mind growing wide withal." When God made first the spirit of man in his own image, then formed, secondly, the body out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into it the breath of life, and man became a living soul, a vital unit, he never intended, to speak humanly, that there should be any separation. The crude earthly body, which was needful as an instrument of the mind's development, was intended to remain, not in its crudeness, yet not to be cast off, but to be etherealized. Had the finite spirit maintained its normal union with the infinite, and so been constantly replenished with spiritual life from the original fountain, the crass material body would have been gradually spiritualized, until, the course of the present development being completed, the whole organism would have been sublimated into a higher

sphere of being. But the finite spirit, by a caprice of liberty, separated itself from the divine spirit. Cut off from God, evil entered the soul, bringing into it disease, the consequence of which was the destruction of the unity of life, and the death of the body by a gradual process of disorder, suffering, and decay. Through the channel of physical generation the stream of death has flowed in a cold, sullen flood down the ages, and overspread the whole human family.

Having thus cleared some objections, and stated our conception of the phenomenon of death and its cause, we must appeal to the Scriptures for its confirmation. The word death in the Bible has three different meanings. First. Separation of the spirit of man from the spirit of God. Second. The separation of the body from the spirit, which is the consequence of the spirit's separation from God. Third. The state of the lost in eternity, called in the Bible the second death. Without here quoting passages, we presume it will be admitted that the word death is used in other places as well as in the text for physical death, referring especially to the state of the soul denuded of the material body. In the first chapters of Genesis, where we have divinely authenticated representations of the creation, the fall and the entrance of death into the human race, on the earthward and historic side, physical death is declared to be the punishment of sin. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," a penalty which we shall see, if we take into view the manner of its accomplishment, was exactly executed; for on the day that Eve tasted the forbidden fruit the dying process began. The statement, "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return," can not be properly understood to mean that because the body was made of dust it must be resolved into dust again, but only that because man had separated himself from the infinite spirit, here set forth under the figure of the tree of life, his corruptible part should fail of being changed into the incorruptible, according to the original divine intention. Had Adam and Eve eaten of the tree of life instead of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, their material organisms would have lived forever, becoming spiritualized and glorified, and been translated at last, with no dissolution, to the higher spheres of immortality. This is evident from the fact that after the disobedience God banished them from Eden, and guarded the tree of life by cherubim and a flaming sword turning every whither, lest they should even then eat of the tree of life and live forever.

It is not without significance here to remind you of the translations bodily into the heavens which are recorded in the Bible. Enoch was translated, as was also Elijah, spared from the hands of the last enemy, to reveal what had been possible for all men, had not sin entered the world, and death by sin. Also we may call to mind that grand translation which was so near and real to

the faith of the apostles and early Christians, "when we that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up together" with the risen dead "into the clouds, to meet the Lord, in the air."

We find the most conclusive and glorious argument for the truth of our conception of human destiny, had not sin disturbed it, in the history of Christ, who is the ideal man. In him humanity realizes its destiny according to the original divine intention. In our nature, which he assumed, he lived a pure, sinless life, condemning sin in the flesh. His spirit was in constant communion with God. The result was, that his material body, which was as really and coarsely material as ours, was gradually refined, transformed, glorified with the Spirit. But did not Christ die? Certainly. Yet he said of his life: "No man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." By this we understand that his body was indestructible. His dying was a voluntary act. Christ's death was connected with the work of redemption. Christ's life, as an ideal of human life, should be taken in its completeness from Bethlehem to the Mount of Ascension as if he had not died. Three important epochs appear in the course of his bodily glorification—the baptism, transfiguration, resurrection—luminous points in that sublime history, marking the progress of that spiritualizing process which reached its perfection when the Lord, having blessed his disciples at Bethany, "was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight."

From all these considerations, and many others, we are warranted, I think, to believe that while flesh and blood, that is, the crude, unspiritualized matter, can not inherit the kingdom of God, the body may be so transformed by the spirit, without however ceasing to be material, as to inherit it with the spirit, and no separation by the violence of death be at all necessary. That this possibility is not realized, and death has passed upon all men, can be explained only from the fact that all have sinned.

If now we are satisfied that physical death, in the case of man, is a violent and degrading interruption of the true course of human development, we have the fundamental reason of that aversion and dread of death of which we speak. We see why all men in all ages have regarded death as an enemy, and have been looking, waiting for deliverance. Poets and sentimentalists may talk disparagingly of the body, exalt the glory of a pure, immaterial existence. We may try to soften the hard fate by laying such flattering unctions to our souls. Yet, in spite of all, we have a feeling deeper than any philosophy, that the body is an essential part of us, that we are not complete without it. A pure, spiritual, bodiless existence, if conceivable, is strange and horrible to our feeling. All our habits of consciousness are connected with a

material organism, with bodily senses. To be stripped of these, is to be, in the expressive epithet of the apostle, "unclothed." It is going naked and alone into the darkness of eternity. We can form no conception of this unclothed condition, how we shall feel, and act, and be. Society seems impossible. All is uncertain, gloomy, terrible. Compare with these statements the descriptions of Sheol in the Old Testament, or of Hades in the ancient heathen poets. Nothing could be more lonely and cheerless than their conceptions of the place and condition of the departed disembodied spirits. "A land of darkness and the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." There go the low and the high, the rich and the poor together, driven down by that inexorable tyrant who can be bought off with no price, carrying nothing with them of what they once had; naked they go down to the shadowy realm of the dead, where there is no remembrance of God and no thanksgiving, but all thought and activity is swallowed up in gloom and silence. When the Old Testament saints speak of the terrible fate of death, they stop not with the thought of the pain of that moment when the living frame is battered to pieces by the tremendous blows of the destroyer, but go forward and include in their idea the fearfully uncertain condition into which dissolution conducts them. So with us. It is the sense of being unclothed in death, the uncertainty and darkness which hang over that state into which we pass when we drop the covering of flesh and all the lights of sense are extinguished, which makes death a thing so much dreaded. Faith, indeed, can overcome this terror. It overcame it so far in the case of Job and the patriarchs as to make them feel that the intermediate state would be one at least of rest, "where the wicked cease from troubling," and to give them courage to lie down calmly and submissively in the grave. We who know that "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord;" we who have heard that precious promise, "To-day thou shalt thou be with me in paradise;" have a more inviting view of the intermediate state, and can meet death through the grace of Christ in joyful confidence, desiring, it may be, to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than to be here. Yet even from the most commanding outlook of Christian faith we can not but feel that our condition of separateness from the body will be comparatively an imperfect one, and can but look forward hopefully to the end for the grace which shall be given us at the coming of the Lord, when the earth and the sea shall give up their dead, and the bodies of those who sleep in Jesus shall be made like unto his own glorious body, according to the working of his power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. Then shall the last enemy be destroyed, and that saying brought to pass, "Death shall be swallowed up in victory." We here touch,

II. Our second point—the destruction of Death. I must be brief.

1. By whom? Christ, the Lord of life, is the vanquisher of Hades, according as it is written: "O death! I will be thy plagues. O grave! I will be thy destruction." He is the long-awaited-for Deliverer; waited for not only by patriarchs and prophets and holy men of Israel, but also by the Gentile world, groaning, discontented, under the heavy fate of death, embodying their "unconscious prophecies," and expectations of redemption in myths and legends of heroes and saviours. Christ is the Almighty Deliverer who rolls away the stone from the door of the world's sepulcher. For this work he came down hither, "took our death and slew our death out of the abundance of his own life." The sting of death is sin. The devil, who is the chief agent of evil, is the author of death, called by our Lord, in John, "a murderer from the beginning." Jesus must therefore conquer him who is the power of sin and has the power of death—that is, the devil—if he will deliver them who, through fear of it, have been all their lifetime subject to bondage. This he has done. This is the great work which he came on earth to do—to dry up hell and empty the grave. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." To this end he took part in our corruptible flesh and blood, condemned sin in the flesh, and in his own person grappled with death itself on the cross. We can not tell why it was necessary for the Lord of life and the vanquisher of death himself to enter its dark domain and become subject to its power. So it must be. Jesus died. But as Samson in his death broke the power of the Philistines, so he who is mightier than Samson, in his death grappled its pillars and shook the deep foundations of destruction's kingdom. Thence he rose from the dead, taking captivity captive. Now seated at the right hand of God invisible, he pours forth "unto all and upon all them that believe" a flood of life which heals our sin and slays our death.

2. How? Two things are implied in this conquest of the last enemy.

First. The overcoming of the subjective feeling of dread. We must all die. There is no reprieve. In triumph or in quailing, that is the question. They who have died in faith have usually received a divine grace of illumination and courage which has disarmed the last enemy of his terror, and enabled those who were all their lifetime in fear of him to shout aloud: "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" Some secret revelations are made to the saints on the confines of time, some fuller unfolding of the spiritual consciousness, some glorious visions of things invisible, we know not what, by which the darkness that hangs over the grave is dissipated, all fear of death

is removed, and a song of victory and praise breaks from their lips. A few days since I received the intelligence of the death of a very dear friend, who in constant suffering had yet lived a brave, pure, generous life, but was always in bondage through fear of death. His friends were anxious about the manner in which he would meet the last enemy. When the hour of conflict came, though in the full exercise of his mental faculties, he seemed another man. "Tell my friends," said he, "this is the happiest morning of my life!" Thank God, death had no terror for the soul castled in Jesus! Death is not night to the good man, but rather the inbreaking of an eternal morning to the rapt vision of the disenchanted spirit. Could we gather up into one all the death-bed utterances of the saints, what a hymn of victory it would be. Oh! there is an overcoming power of faith which converts the gloomy portal of the grave into a triumphal arch under which the hosts of the living God have marched, and are marching still, in grand procession into the eternal city.

Secondly. The power of death and all his works must be destroyed to make the victory complete. This is a work of time. The empire of the grave is undermined and in a state of decline. The complete abolishment of it is at the end, when the Lord shall descend with the blast of a trumpet, and the dead shall be raised, the living changed, the corruptible for the incorruptible, the mortal for immortality.

We can not enter on the discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which here finds place in the order of our thought. The whole drift of these remarks has been in the direction of a literal acceptance of the New Testament statements. That flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God is, of course, admitted. The body must be changed, spiritualized, without however ceasing to be material. As the Scriptures are silent respecting the manner of the resurrection of the body, questions may be raised which we can not answer without coming into conflict with natural science, in appearance at least. That the same particles which composed the body before death will be gathered into the raised body, though not impossible with God, seems hardly probable to us. Yet that the body will be raised, a material body be joined to the spirit, that it will be the same body which the spirit before inhabited in being, an organ adapted to that spirit's peculiar character and work, preserving imperishably the significance of the individual, recognizable by all who knew the individual in his earthly life, can not be doubted by any one who accepts the ideas of this discourse. If it be the original design that man should dwell in a material body; if death, in separating the soul from the body, introduces us into a condition which is imperfect and unblest comparatively; and if the divine redemption is to completely destroy all the works of death; then there must be a re-

union of soul and body in the case of all who have died in faith. This, we firmly believe, is not only the doctrine and hope of the New Testament, but the desire and expectation of reason. With the vague and barren notion of a purely spiritual immortality our opinion is in antagonism. This is not what the heart, as it looks futureward, longs for. The souls of heroes, according to the theology of Homer and the diviner poets of heathen ages, were believed to be immortal. Yet their condition, "unclothed," was cheerless and gloomy enough. The glad news which the world has been waiting to hear, and has heard from Him by whom "life and immortality are brought to light," is the immortality of man; man in his integrity, body and soul. The words which carried joy to the broken hearts at the grave in Bethany were these: "Thy brother shall rise again." Only in the resurrection of the body is death abolished, the heavy fate removed, the desire of humanity satisfied. The complete overthrow of death will be realized at the end, when they that are in their graves shall hear His voice and come forth, and Christ shall have put all enemies under his feet.

Arresting the course of thought here, pause a moment and think of this great conquest and victory. Death's empire is an ancient one. Ever since the sin of Adam he has ruled over the whole world of men and "never had an interregnum in his reign." His empire is wider than the empire of the Cæsars, and built on the ruins of all. Its huge foundation-stones are laid deep in the nether world, and the sable scepter has swayed it over all generations. Innumerable and terrible ministers sit in the grim monarch's court to execute his will. Riding forth on his pale horse in awful majesty, it has been given to him "to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with disease, and with the beasts of the earth." Famine and pestilence are his servants. He lets loose the dogs of war, shouting havoc! and rides in fury over the devastation of battle. At his bidding the angry sea crushes the mighty ships as if they were egg-shells; the volcano buries whole cities in one common grave. The earthquake opens its jaws wide, "and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth descend into it." He has planted the crust of the earth all over several times with the graves of the slain. We see the vestiges of his work in the monumental marble which every where meets our eyes. O angel of death! thou sweepst through the air, and the blast of thy wings makes the world shudder!

But this old, wide, powerful empire must fall, and not a vestige of it be left. Every grave shall be opened, and the bodies of the saints locked up therein shall come forth to a reünion with their kindred spirits; and in the place of death's dark reign shall stand the glorious kingdom of everlasting life. What are other conquests compared with this of our immortal King? "It is the grandest

revelation of the divine glory in the boldest world-creative combination," says one, "when God proposed to unite in one being elements the most remote, matter and spirit, making man the central creation of the universe, thereby adding to the divine kingdom a province which must have been forever foreign to it." How much more wonderful when, by the sin of man, the plan seemed likely to go to the ground, and death had gotten empire over the world, that Christ is able by his life and love to lift the fallen spirits out of their bondage, restore to them the material forms of which the enemy had despoiled them, build up palaces of life out of the very dust of corruption, sweeping all traces of death at last from the face of the earth, and establishing a kingdom of life here more glorious than that which sin demolished.

Brethren, let us then cast our "nighted color off," and put on the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Let us sing pæan at our new-made graves. All hail to the Prince of Life, who saves us from death and hell! "And they sung a new song, saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for thou hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and there shall be no more death, for the former things are passed away."

SERMON XIV.

BY REV. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D.D.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.*

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."—COL. 1 : 16.

WHILE worldly minds are confined to a few surrounding objects, unconscious of the great scenes above them, like men in a cavern who have never beheld the glories of nature; the devout Christian delights to raise his eyes, and contemplate the perfections of his Creator. He feels a noble and inextinguishable ardor to ascend in meditation to everlasting things, to lose sight of earth in his sublime excursions, to tread the pavements of heaven,

* We publish this rare and eloquent discourse by request. It is the only copy we have seen or heard of. Most or all those who heard it are in their graves. It is worthy of a printed resurrection.—ED. N. P.

to take a near view of God, and from that exalted summit to look abroad among his Father's works. The point to which his thoughts aspire, the highest that a created mind can reach, is that from whence he may view the amazing purposes which God is carrying into execution, and by this means discover the moral character of their Author, and the tendency of all things. On this eminence stood the great apostle of the Gentiles, when he pronounced the words of our text. Let us accompany him to that commanding height; and while we view, may the divine Spirit clear the film from our mental sight, that we may gaze with amazement, adoration, and love.

Placing ourselves at the beginning of time, and looking back into eternity, we are anxious to know what induced the ever-blessed God to exercise his power in the production of creatures, and what valuable object he proposed to accomplish by all his works. In order to a right solution of these points, we must conceive an eternal propensity in the fountain of love to overflow, and fill with happiness numberless vessels fitted to receive it. We must conceive an eternal propensity in God to manifest the richness and perfection of his nature to creatures; not for the sake of ostentatious display, but to enrich the universe with a knowledge of his glory, and to lay a foundation for general confidence and delight in him. A state of unproductive repose was not a condition becoming himself. As the sun exists in his proper and most glorious state when shedding his beams to bless the dependent planets, so God is conceived to exist in his proper and most glorious state when he is benevolently exercising his perfections on the created system, and, so to speak, hangs them around him like an eternal robe of light, to awaken the wonder and joy of creatures. The stupendous object which he contemplated was an immense and beautifully adjusted kingdom of holy and happy creatures, in which he should be acknowledged as the glorious head, and they should take their proper place at his feet; in which he should be felt as the center of attraction to draw all its parts into union with himself, and as a sun to shed blessed influence upon the whole; and over which, when its prosperity should be completed, he might "rejoice with joy, and rest in his love." (Zeph. 3 : 17.)

This was the glorious end which his goodness eternally proposed: and now we are to view the means which he ordained for its accomplishment. The principal mean adopted was the appointment of his Son to act as his viceroy in the creation and government of all worlds, to assume a created nature into personal union with himself, and thus to fill up the infinite chasm between God and his creation, and be the grand connecting bond between finite and infinite natures. As head of his Father's kingdom, to which he was to be closely united by his assumed nature, and as the medium of all intercourse between that kingdom and his Father, he was

to form the most perfect union between God and his creatures. "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." (John 17 : 21, 23.) Put forward into a public station as his Father's organ and image, to be seen by every eye, he was to bring out the invisible God to view from the hidden recesses of his nature—to bring down the incomprehensible God within the reach of finite apprehensions, and to serve as a mild glass through which creatures might view the splendors of divine perfection without dazzling and paining their sight.

This is the Christ, the anointed agent, of whom our text declares: "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him." This is not said of him simply as God, but as the Christ, who fills a middle place between God and man, and partakes of both natures. The character intended is pointedly marked in the context, every part of which applies only to Christ. The Apostle is treating of the Messiah, and describes him as the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, the head of the body, the church, the first-born from the dead, in whom we have redemption through his blood; all of which can be understood of him only as Mediator, and not merely as second person of the Trinity. Can we then acquit the apostle of the charge of introducing a strange confusion of characters, unless our text be allowed to assert that all things were created by the Messiah, and for the Messiah?

The truth I take to be this: All the works which God designed to produce throughout the universe, he delegated Christ to accomplish. All the displays of God which were ever intended to be made to creatures, Christ was appointed to make. The vast plan which involved the whole creation, and all the measures of divine government, was one plan; the execution of which, in all its parts, was committed to Christ. It is elsewhere said that all things were made for God, that is, for the display of his perfections, and for the promotion of that general interest of his kingdom which he benevolently considers his own. In perfect consistency with this, all things are here said to be made for Christ, that is, for the illustration of his mediatorial glory (not indeed as the ultimate and chief end, but rather as the principal mode in which the glory of God was to be displayed) and to subserve the vast plan which he was appointed to execute, in the issue of which God will be all in all. It would seem then that it was in the character of Messiah that he created the angels, the sun, moon, and stars, and all other things visible and invisible; and that he created them all for himself as Mediator; in a word, that he created all worlds to subserve his mediatorial plan, the principal scene of which, it is well known,

was laid upon this earth. The same apostle in another place declares that God created all things by Jesus Christ—and why? “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” (Eph. 3 : 9, 10.) In one of his addresses to the Christian Church the apostle expressly asserts: “All things are for your sakes.” (2 Cor. 4 : 15.)

Does it seem incredible that all other worlds should be created to promote the purposes of grace upon this earth? Why is this more incredible than that the Mediator should upon this earth purchase the glory of governing the rest of the universe, and that he should govern the whole with reference to his Church?—points which are, in the clearest manner, revealed. It is said that he humbled himself and became obedient unto death: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

What purpose the Mediator intended to answer by other worlds and their inhabitants, in prosecuting the plan of redemption, we do not fully comprehend. The angels, it is well known, are subject to him as ministering spirits to his church, and look with prying curiosity and astonishment into the mysteries of redemption. (Heb. 1 : 14; 1 Pet. 1 : 12.) But what use he makes of other worlds we are not told in his word, farther than that they are put under his dominion; and we also know that they serve to instruct his Church, while they influence, adorn, and enlighten the earth on which it resides. And whatever inhabitants they contain, we must believe that they do now, or will in some future period, bend to look into the transcendent wonders of redemption, and will take lessons of deep instruction and interest from the astonishing scenes which are unfolded on the earth.†

* The dominion conferred on Christ as a reward for what he performed on earth, seems not to have been limited to his Church, but to have extended to the universe. Having by his death fulfilled the part which in the covenant of redemption he had engaged to perform, he appeared to his disciples, and said unto them: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” He was at that time more fully invested with the dominion of the universe, which by anticipation, he had as Mediator enjoyed before his incarnation. I mean not to suggest the idea of the preëxistence of his human soul; he sustained the office of Mediator, and in this character governed the world, before he possessed any other than the divine nature. This universal dominion, which is temporary, is that which, at the conclusion of the final judgment, he will resign to the Father; while he will still retain dominion in Zion, and according to ancient promises will hold the throne of his father David forever.

† If the sentiment that other worlds were created for the Mediator should not ap-

But passing by other worlds, the one which we inhabit was certainly made for the Mediator. This is the favored world where he was to assume the nature that was intended to form the connecting link between God and creatures; where he was to found a church to be "a spectacle to angels and to men;" (1 Cor. 4 : 9;) where he was to display the most august and awful wonder of his death. Here he was to find a miserable race, without help and without hope, immersed in vice and ignorance, groaning under the curse of a holy law, and sinking into everlasting woe. Such an occasion was to be presented for the exercise of his unequalled compassion, for an exhibition of the infinite tenderness of his heart; the history of which is inscribed on the tablet of the earth in tears and blood—the history of which has been a million of times repeated by deeply affected angels, and will be rehearsed in the songs of the redeemed to eternity. To this earth and to Calvary methinks I see every eye directed from the most distant world which God has made. All seem to point to this, and say : "Behold, for once, what infinite love could do !"

The several texts and arguments already adduced prove emphatically that this earth and all its furniture were created for the Mediator. And further to confirm this idea let me ask, what valuable purpose, except by means of the Mediator, could a world be expected to answer, which it was foreseen, would so quickly be ruined by sin? What valuable end, in any other way, has it in fact answered? We judge of the design of a thing by the use to which it is put. To what valuable use then has the earth been put, but to bring glory to God and good to creatures, through the mediation of Christ? If it was designed for the happiness of men, none have tasted happiness in it since the fall, or found it a passage to heaven, but by the Mediator. That Priest only has procured its blessings; that Prophet only has instructed its ignorance; that King only has dispensed its comforts. If it was created for the glory of God, this glory shines only in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4 : 6.) "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1 : 18.) Him only have men beheld; only his works and providence do men contemplate. Not one purpose desirable to benevolence, or illustrative of the wisdom or goodness of its Author, is answered by the earth, but in consequence of the mediation of Christ. And of all the displays of divine glory, the richest appear in his incarnation and atonement, in the pardon and government which he administers in the Church. As the earth has in fact answered no desirable purpose,

pear sufficiently supported, I am willing it should be understood as expressed rather hypothetically than positively. The author has no title either to the honor or dishonor of originating the idea, which has been held by divines of reputation, and possesses at least the negative merit of not contradicting any of the doctrines of our Church.

but through the agency of the Mediator, such a fact must have been foreseen in the day of its creation, and it must have been made only for the sake of the good to be accomplished by Christ. It was erected for a theater on which he might make an exhibition of the divine perfections in redeeming his Church, and punishing his enemies: and this being its design, the work of erecting it was, of course, assigned to him for whose use it was intended. He formed every continent and ocean, every lake and island, every mountain and valley, to serve a race who he foresaw would fall, and whom he was determined to redeem. He created every beast that ranges the desert, every fowl that flutters under the arch of heaven, every fish that dwells in the caves of ocean, "every drop, and every dust," to subserve his great design of grace. The whole plan of this world, including creation and providence, including every event from its beginning to the final judgment, was involved in the plan of redemption. The plan is one, though comprehending a vast variety of parts. Among this variety, some parts are designed to fit the earth, by innumerable secret and nameless influences, for the accommodation of a race to be redeemed—others to unfold the wretched character and condition of men, to illustrate their need of a Saviour, and the richness of redeeming grace. Others are intended to prepare the way for carrying into effect the purposes of mercy, and to facilitate, in many ways, their accomplishment.

Does the question arise, How is it possible that every minute substance and event should be serviceable to the kingdom of Christ? The speaker does not presume to explain all the particular relations and tendencies of God's works; but this, in general, must be granted—they are all designed to promote the glory of God, though the manner can not be explained. Give me this, and you give me all: for whatever promotes the glory of God was needful to the kingdom of Christ, since the discovery of God to men was an essential part of the plan of restoring them to the enjoyment of him. The objection that we can not discover the manner in which every thing renders service to Christ, does not disprove our doctrine. If in so simple a device as a manufactory constructed by human art, buildings must be erected, and many machines, instruments, vessels, and different substances employed, the use of some of which a stranger would be unable to explain, though all are subordinate to one end; it is no wonder that the stupendous plan of redeeming a world should contain an inconceivable variety of parts, the subserviency of many of which, though necessary to the result, should elude our research.

As the earth was created for the Mediator, so it is preserved to be the residence of his Church; in allusion to which fact the Church is called the salt of the earth, as being the occasion of saving it from dissolution. (Matt. 5 : 13.)

By Christ, and for Christ, the earth is also governed. Having erected this theater for an exhibition of redeeming grace, he took the management of it into his own hands, and put it to the use for which it was intended. He early established a Church upon it, and in the character of Mediator took into his hands its universal government. Made head over all things to the Church, he has marched down the tract of ages, holding the north in his right hand, and the south in his left, with his eye immovably fixed upon this single cause, and forcing all nations and events to pay tribute to it. In the history of his government which the Holy Ghost has sketched, we trace his dealings with nations and individuals for many ages, and view his providence under a column of light which discloses its tendency and object. Here we discover his hand employed behind the scene, in directing the affairs of many inferior nations, and especially of the four great empires of antiquity, with pointed reference to his Church. Looking through the glass of prophecy, we discern that throne which Ezekiel saw in his vision, rolling on the wheels of providence down the descent of time to the end of the world, prostrating every interest raised against his Church, and overturning to prepare the way for the full establishment of his kingdom upon earth. Under his government, the apostle expressly declares: "All things work together for good" to his Church; "all things are theirs, whether the world, or things present, or things to come." (Rom. 8: 28; 1 Cor. 3: 21, 22.) The revolutions of empires, rebellions and wars, the councils of kings, and the debates of senates, are all pressed in the service of Christ. Bibles, sacraments, Sabbaths, and the effusions of the Holy Spirit, have no other object. Seed-time and harvest, famine and pestilence, tempests, volcanoes, and earthquakes, are all made to advance his interest.

As this world was wholly intended for the scene of redemption, all the good which it contains belongs to the plan of grace that was laid in Christ. His kingdom comprises every valuable object which God proposed to himself in creating, preserving, and governing the world—the whole amount of his glory upon earth, and the immortal blessedness of millions of men. It is the only cause on earth that is worth an anxious thought. It is the only interest which God pursues or values, and the only object worthy of the attention of men. For this sole object were they created, and placed in this world, with social affections adapted to their present state, with employments appointed for the preservation of their lives. No one interest distinct from the kingdom of Christ are they required to pursue. No laws but those which appertain to this kingdom, and which of course respect only the concerns of it, were ever enacted by heaven to direct their conduct. Their secular employments, their social duties, are enjoined only as subordinate to the interests of this kingdom. Their private and social

propensities they are not indeed required to extinguish ; but with these about them, to march with a strong and steady step directly towards this great object, with their eye filled with its magnitude, and with hearts glowing with desires for its promotion. It is required that whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, they should do all with reference to this object. As then we can rely on the decision of infinite wisdom, expressed both in the example and precepts of God, we are assured that this kingdom ought to engross the supreme cares of men, and exert a commanding influence over all their actions—that it should be the great object of their lives, and their governing motive every hour. The bosom of the child should be taught to beat with delight at the name of Jesus, before it is capable of comprehending the nature of his kingdom. The youth ought to regulate all his pleasures, his actions, and his hopes, with an eye fixed on this kingdom. The man ought to respect it in every important undertaking, in all his common concerns, in the expressions of his lips, in the government of his passions, in the thoughts of his heart. Not worldly emolument or distinction, but the interest of the blessed Redeemer should be his highest object—should be daily and hourly loved and sought with all his heart and soul. To this should he consecrate all his talents, all his influence, all his wealth. Instead of pursuing with headlong zeal their separate interests, all men should join in promoting this kingdom, as the common interest of mankind—the great concern for which they were sent into the world.

If the eyes of men were opened, they would see this cause to be of infinite value—worthy to be the object for which all things were created. It is the cause which not only all the energies of nature, but all beings and agents, conspire to advance. It is the beloved cause on which the heart of the Son of God was set, when it beat in the babe of Bethlehem, and when it bled on the point of the spear. It is the cause to which angels have zealously ministered ; to which devils have involuntarily lent their aid. It is the cause which has engaged the ardent attention of wise and good men in every age. It is the cause for which patriarchs prayed, for which prophets taught, for which apostles toiled, for which martyrs bled. For the consummation of this cause upon earth many eyes have waited, from age to age, in unwearied expectation ; many prophets and righteous men have desired to see it ; many who sealed their faith with their blood, looked forward to this glorious event with eyes glistening in the agonies of death. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together to bring forth this grand consummation.

The cause of Christ is the only one which will prevail and live amidst the wrecks of time. Strong as the arm of omnipotence, it will hold on in its majestic course, bearing down and crushing every thing that resists its progress. Every interest that is placed

on this foundation is safe; but inevitable ruin awaits every thing beside. Wo to the man whose destinies are not united with the kingdom of Christ. Wo, wo to the man who sets himself to oppose this holy kingdom.

Though at present disregarded by men, the kingdom of Christ is destined to engage the profound attention of all nations. It is destined to banish from the abodes of men the miserable effects of the fall, and to restore all the tribes of the earth to themselves and to God. When the glories of this kingdom shall cover all lands—when, after a long succession of wintry years, the spring-time of the world shall come—when the beauties of holiness shall clothe every region, and songs of salvation shall float in every breeze—then will it be seen that the world was not made in vain. It is transporting to look down the vale of time, and see the miseries of six thousand years come to an end, the convulsions of a disordered world composed, and the glory of Zion filling all the earth. Lend me an angel's harp, while I look forward to approaching scenes, which, distant as they then were, enraptured the souls of the holy prophets. How divinely did they sing, when, from the mount of vision, they beheld across the shade of many troublous years the Church standing on the field she had won, triumphantly shouting: "Lo! this is our God; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." (Isa. 25 and 26.) Sometimes in the midst of their sorrows, while nothing was escaping them but the sounds of a breaking heart, a glimpse of this glory would break upon their view; and then the tear which stood in their eye forgot to fall, their half-uttered sigh died upon their tongue, they awoke to rapture, and exclaimed: "Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Zion, for the time to favor her, yea the set time is come." (See an instance of this nature in the 102d Psalm.)

The Church has hitherto possessed but a small proportion of a world created for its use; but the day is drawing on, when the everlasting Gospel shall be preached to every kindred, and tongue, and people—when from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles—when all shall know him from the least to the greatest, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Their sun shall no more go down, nor their moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended. A thousand times ten thousand captives shall drop their chains, and come forth to light with joys too big for utterance; and this miserable world, once the emblem of hell, this miserable world, after being so long shaken with tempests, shall, like the waters of a peaceful pool,

reflect the image of heaven. Paradise shall be restored; and then shall appear, to the confusion of all the enemies of Christ, the blessed efficacy of his Gospel to heal the wounds of a bleeding world. This is the triumph of the woman's seed—this, the bruising of the serpent's head. Is not every Christian rapt as he thus views from Pisgah the promised rest on earth? Is enthusiasm here a crime? Would not coldness be rebellion? Come, thou Desire of nations, come! Come, thou restorer of a world!

Lo! a still more transporting sight appears! My ravished eye beholds the kingdom of Christ advanced to the glories of the heavenly state. Faith looks through the vail which conceals the eternal world, and discerns thousands of millions of happy beings, ransomed from destruction and brought home to their Father's house—it beholds the Church encircling the throne of her Redeemer, casting her honors at his feet, buried in the ocean of his glory, united to the Father by ineffable relation, while all heaven is ringing with hosannas for redeeming love: there, there is the august kingdom completed which God at first undertook to erect! Say now—pronounce—is not the object worthy of all the means employed for its attainment? Do you hesitate? Look, and think again: Follow only one human soul into eternity; trace its endless course through delights which flesh and blood could not sustain, or through fire sufficient to melt down all the planets; pursue it through the ascending degrees of its eternal progression, see it leaving behind the former dimensions of seraphim and cherubim, and still stretching towards God; or sinking forever in the bottomless abyss—my God! what an event is the redemption of a single soul! Oh! the infinite mercy that redeemed such countless millions! Oh! the boundless compassion of Christ—the ocean without a bottom or a shore! Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, which are disclosed in this unfathomable plan of grace!

Where are infatuated infidels now? Bring up hither all their bands to behold the glorious Agent, and the glorious interest, which they oppose. Julian, Celsus, and Porphyry, what now think you of Christ! Voltaire, Hume, Gibbon, and Bolingbroke, where are now those tongues which blasphemed the anointed Messiah? Let our subject burst like ten thousand thunders upon those who, in rejecting the Mediator, resist all the designs of God, who would destroy the only interest of the universe, who are fatally contending with all the energies of omnipotence!

Oh! that I had a voice to reach the hearts of impenitent sinners of every class. Knew ye the infinite glories of our Messiah, the darling of heaven, the wonder of angels, the august Agent of the universe—knew ye your ruin and necessities—knew ye the tenderness of him who wept because you would sin: who, to save your wretched souls, sweat drops of blood, and expired on the ragged

irons—you would not thus idly pass by his reeking cross, you would not thus refuse him reverence, and coldly cast away the benefits of his dying love.

In applying this subject I would summon, were I able, all the kingdoms of the earth to arise in one mass to urge forward the cause of the Redeemer. Assemble, ye people, from the four quarters of the globe; awake, ye nations, from your sleeping pillow—combine in this grand object of your existence—this common interest of the world. Ye kindreds and tribes, why are ye searching for happiness out of this kingdom, and overlooking the cause of Christ, as though he had no right to hold an interest on earth? Know ye that no man is licensed to set up another interest on this ground which is sacred to the Redeemer. What have you to do in this world if you will not serve the Lord's Anointed? If you will not submit to his dominion, and join to advance his cause, go, go to some other world—this world was made for Christ. But whither can you go from his presence? All worlds are under his dominion. Ah! then return, and let your bosoms swell with the noble desire to be fellow-workers with the inhabitants of other worlds in serving this glorious kingdom.

My brethren, my brethren! while all the agents in the universe are employed, some with fervent desire, and others by involuntary instrumentality, to advance the cause of Christ, will an individual of you refuse it your cordial support? Can you, in the center of universal action, consent to remain in a torpid state, absorbed in private cares, and contracted into a littleness for which you were not designed? Awake, and generously expand your desires, to encircle this benevolent and holy kingdom. God, who has set you an example of exclusive regard to this object, demands it of you. Christ, who purchased the Church with his blood, demands it of you. The holy angels, who incessantly minister to the Church, demand it of you. The illustrious army of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, by their services and sufferings for the Church, demand it of you. How then can you meet the eyes of this awful company of spectators, who watch you from every window of heaven, unless you rouse every sleeping faculty, and with your collected powers join to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer?

My brethren, there is much for you to do. Though the world was made for Christ, though all the nations of it are intended to swell his triumph, yet, at this very moment, five parts out of six of that race for whom he shed his sacred blood, are perishing in ignorance of his Gospel, chained in miserable and degrading servitude to Satan, many of them are also suffering all the hardships of a barbarous state, without domestic or civil order, wallowing in the sinks of vice, and besmearing the altars of devils with human blood. Touched with affection for Him who pitied us that we

might pity others—for him who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich—can we forbear to cherish the pious wish that he may enjoy the reward of his dying love? Do not our hearts throb with desire to be instrumental in giving him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession?

Distinguished will be the glory of that generation who shall be selected to bear a conspicuous part in this blessed work. If those who are now alive on the earth decline this honor, it will certainly be seized by a more generous and holy posterity. To the present generation, however, it seems fairly tendered by the existing indications of divine providence. Great events appear to be struggling in their birth. In the eager attitude of hope, many are looking for the dawn of a better day, and even believe that they already see the light purpling the east. The Christian world, after long contenting itself with prayers for the heathen, and with saying, "Be ye warmed and filled," is awaking to more charitable views. Men, warmed with apostolic zeal, have abandoned the comforts of civilized life, and are gone to the ends of the earth, to bear to benighted nations the first tidings of a precious Saviour. Numerous societies have risen into existence on both sides of the Atlantic, under whose patronage missionaries are now employed from India to the American wilderness, from Greenland to the southern ocean. Some of the first fruits of their labors, I hope, are already gathered into the heavenly garner. While our brethren are thus summoning us from the four quarters of the earth to come up to the help of the Lord, let us not incur the curse of Meroz; let us quickly put our hands to the work lest it be done without us. "If we altogether hold our peace at this time, then shall there enlargement arise from another place; but we and our father's house may be destroyed." (Esth. 4 : 14.) But why should I thus speak? You, my brethren, have already felt the heavenly impulse; you have given to the Lord; and the affecting accounts of your missionaries show that you have received, thus early, the blessing of some who were ready to perish.

Let us still pursue the glorious design, and rise above every objection which a cold, calculating spirit may cast in our way. We are bound to persevere by the express command to go forth into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. We are bound by mercies which we ourselves have received. Had not benevolent men devoted their property and lives to bring the Gospel to our fathers, we might, this evening, have been assembled, not in this temple of God, but to sacrifice our children on the altar of devils. Methinks I hear those generous spirits crying from the verge of heaven: "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Let me never fall into the hands of the man who, while he re-

fuses to aid the missionary efforts of his brethren, coolly says that he submits the fate of the heathen to God. Do you call this submission? Put it to the test: does it preserve you equally composed by the bed of your dying child? While the pressure of private afflictions can torture your soul, call not the apathy with which you view nations sinking into hopeless ruin—call it not submission, nor bring the government of God to sanction a temper as cruel as it is common. Will the government of God convert the heathen without the means of grace? What nation was ever so converted? It is contrary to the established method of divine grace. How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? No, my brethren, missionaries must go among them; and they must be supported. They can not support themselves; they can not derive support from the heathen; nor can they expect to be fed by ravens. Who then shall sustain the expense if not the Christian world? and what portion of the Christian world rather than the American churches? and what district of these churches rather than that in which we are assembled? and what individuals rather than ourselves? Heaven has given us the means; we are living in prosperity on the very lands from which the wretched pagans have been ejected; from the recesses of whose wilderness a moving cry is heard: "When it is well with you, think of poor Indians." This is not ideal; we have received such messages written with their tears.

No, we will not shift this honorable burden upon others. We would sooner contend for it as a privilege. But we need not contend; it is ample enough to satisfy the desires of all. The expense of Christianizing only the savages on our borders will be great; but to extend effectual aid to all the benighted tribes on the American continent, to the numerous islands, to the vast regions of Asia and Africa, would demand the resources of Christendom. Every man is under bonds to God to bear his full proportion of this expense. For whom but for the Redeemer was your wealth created? Thus saith the Lord: "Your silver and your gold is mine." The flocks of Kedar, and the gold of Sheba, were created to bring tribute to his Church. Should we sordidly close our hands against him, he can, with infinite ease, extort a hundred-fold, by sending a blast into our fields, a disease into our families, or a fire into our dwellings. It is a maxim that admits of general application: "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for Christ's sake, the same shall save it." "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again." By one shower of rain, by one restraint upon the winds that would sink your ship, by one breeze sent to fan from your

door the pestilential vapor, he can repay you. And he can bestow the blessings of eternity on you and your children. The best security for remuneration is offered. He tenders you his blessing to reward your charity. And now are you Christians? The trial is to be made. The everlasting fates of men turn upon the existence of a temper to prefer the blessing of God to mammon. "To the merciful he will show himself merciful;" but "whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.

"I have nothing to spare," is the plea of sordid reluctance. But a far different sentiment will be formed amidst the scenes of the last day. Men now persuade themselves that they have nothing to spare till they can support a certain style of luxury, and have provided for the establishment of children. But in the awful hour when you, and I, and all the pagan nations, shall be called from our graves to stand before the bar of Christ, what comparison will these objects bear to the salvation of a single soul? Eternal mercy! let not the blood of the heathen millions, in that hour, be found in our skirts! Standing, as I now do, in sight of a dissolving universe, beholding the dead arise, the world in flames, the heavens fleeing away, all nations convulsed with terror, or rapt in the vision of the Lamb—I pronounce the conversion of a single pagan of more value than all the wealth that ever omnipotence produced. On such an awful subject it becomes me to speak with caution; but I solemnly aver, that were there but one heathen in the world, and he in the remotest corner of Asia, if no greater duty confined us at home, it would be worth the pains for all the people in America to embark together to carry the Gospel to him. Place your soul in his soul's stead. Or rather consent for a moment to change condition with the savages on our borders. Were you posting on to the judgment of the great day, in the darkness and pollution of pagan idolatry, and were they living in wealth in this very district of the Church, how hard would it seem for your neighbors to neglect your misery! When you should open your eyes in the eternal world, and discover the ruin in which they had suffered you to remain, how would you reproach them that they did not even sell their possessions, if no other means were sufficient, to send the Gospel to you. My flesh trembles at the prospect! But they shall not reproach us. It shall be known in heaven that we could pity our brethren. We will send them all the relief in our power, and will enjoy the luxury of reflecting what happiness we may entail on generations yet unborn, if we can only effect the conversion of a single tribe.

All that remains for me to add is a fervent prayer that He who is viewing from heaven the events of this evening, may incline your hearts to the noblest charity, and may reward it with everlasting blessings on you and your children.

SERMON XV.

BY A NEW-YORK CLERGYMAN.

CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE.

"FOR I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—2 TIMOTHY 1: 12.

THE keeping of the soul is of infinite importance, and mainly on two accounts: First, because of the immense value of the soul, and second, because of the imminent danger to which it is exposed. The apostle Paul, fully aware of the value of his soul and the danger to which it was exposed, and conscious of his own inability to keep it, had intrusted it, with all its interests, for time and eternity, to the guardianship of the Lord Jesus Christ; and such was his knowledge of the Lord Jesus, that he felt persuaded the sacred deposit was in his hands safe. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." This is the language of strong assurance. Paul had been led by the Spirit of God to see that he needed a protector, and that Christ was just the protector which his necessities required; and having in the exercise of faith given himself up to the keeping of Christ, he had no fear in regard to the future.

Brethren, we have a right to make our own the confident exultant language of the text. If we have committed our immortal interests to the guardianship of the great Mediator, we are perfectly safe, and with Paul may exclaim: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

We will better understand and appreciate the meaning of the text, if I make two preliminary remarks by way of explanation.

1. Though Christ will keep the soul committed to him, yet he will not keep it as a senseless, inanimate thing is kept, as a rock or a tree, but as a soul—as a rational, immortal, accountable being. He will not keep it as a watch placed upon a shelf, taken down at stated times, wound up, and then replaced, but as a spirit, and in a manner consonant with its own nature. He will keep it by making us do our part, as well as he doing his. We must make a diligent use of the means of grace, we must watch and pray, we must guard against temptation and resist sin, we must strive after holiness, we must put forth strenuous effort to make our calling and election sure. Even Paul, who uttered the text's strong language of assurance, has in another place declared: "I keep under

my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." In other words, Paul was persuaded that if he relaxed his efforts, if he were not constantly on his guard against sin, and did not use the means of divine appointment for his sanctification and salvation, God would reject him, notwithstanding his prominent position, his distinguished attainments, and the many tokens he had received of the divine acceptance; and,

2. That act by which we commit our immortal interests to Christ is an act of faith. It is the gift of the Holy Ghost; it is something which Christ makes us willing to do in the day of his power. It is intrusting our whole selves, body and soul, to the keeping of the Lord Jesus. It is coming to Christ and saying: "Lord, help me, I perish!" "Lord, I am blind, give me sight! I am ignorant, give me knowledge! I am poor, make me rich!" It is stretching out the withered arm. It is saying: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!" "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief!" If we thus commit ourselves to Jesus, we may rest assured he will keep us in a way consistent with his nature and our nature, and finally will crown us with immortal glory at the last great day.

The subject of the text, as thus explained, is simply this: Christian assurance, founded on a knowledge of Christ.

This is not a picture drawn by a poet's fancy, or the dreaming impressions of an enthusiast, or the wild ravings of a fanatic, but the teaching of sound reason; the language of truth and soberness; for Christian assurance rests on a solid, immovable foundation—namely, a personal and experimental knowledge of Christ, who and what he is. "I know whom I have believed."

The believer's knowledge of Christ is derived from three great sources; the word of God, the experience of others, and his own experience: and from these sources he learns who the Redeemer is, what he has promised, and what he has done as pledges that all his promises will be fulfilled.

Such was Paul's knowledge of Christ, that he felt certain Christ was both able and willing to preserve safe unto the day of his second coming that which was intrusted to his care. In what did Paul's idea of the ability of the Saviour consist? I answer, in a word, in the divinity of the Saviour. He had no doubt in regard to this fundamental doctrine of the Bible. He was very far from committing his immortal interests to a mere man—however great and good that man might be—for he knew that his Saviour must be divine, or he could be no Saviour at all. When he committed his soul to Christ, he knew that his soul was safe, because he knew that Christ was the true God, and God over all, blessed forever. Not only did he learn this from the teachings of the Old Testament, and from the testimony of the other apostles and dis-

ciples, but more especially from his experience of the divinity of Christ in his own soul. When he was on his murderous errand to Damascus, and was struck down to the earth by a ray of the transcendent glory of Christ; when he heard the authoritative voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and tremblingly exclaimed, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the voice replied, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest!" when his whole nature was changed, the aim and purpose of his life completely reversed; when the fierce, proud persecutor became the gentle, humble, devoted, self-sacrificing disciple and apostle—how could he doubt that he who had wrought this great change in him was divine, was the Christ, the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke?

Surely in this one event of his life, Paul, by experience, obtained such a knowledge of Christ's character, as to render it most reasonable for him to feel confident that whatever he had committed or should commit into Christ's hands, was safe.

Paul knew what Christ had promised, and it made him confident that what he had committed to Christ was safe.

Christ had also begun, and was carrying on in the soul of the apostle the great work of sanctification. By the providence and Spirit of Christ, Paul was enabled daily to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. His motives were continually growing purer, his hatred of sin stronger and his desire after complete conformity to the Saviour's image more intense and constant. He was by no means satisfied with his present attainments in the divine life, but was striving after greater. He forgot the things which were behind, and reached forth unto those things which were before, looking ever unto Jesus as the author and finisher of his faith.

And Christ was also by his providence and Spirit, continually supporting Paul amid his many trials, temptations, and dangers. He imparted to him the Holy Spirit, to guide, instruct, and comfort him. That Spirit was often to him as a light shining in a dark place, pointing out to him the way in which Christ would have him walk, and giving him the disposition to walk therein. That Spirit was in him also as "a well of water, springing up to everlasting life," invigorating and strengthening him. That Spirit was in him also as a comforter; and his consolations were neither few nor small. But more especially did Christ support Paul in the midst of personal danger. Often did the apostle hear the voice, "Fear not, Paul, no man shall set upon thee to hurt thee;" and so sure was Paul of this protection, that he said: "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and shall preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom."

In view of all these considerations, in view of the knowledge which Paul had derived from the testimony of God, the testimony of others, and his own experience, in regard to the character of

Christ, what he had promised and what he had done in his behalf, was his confidence in the Saviour to keep that which he had committed to him against the day of final decision, weak or fanatical? Was it not the most reasonable conclusion he could possibly draw from the premises brought to his mind? Surely there was no room for misgivings, or doubts, or fears; and well might he exclaim, as he did exclaim: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

And how clear and definite the knowledge of Christ we derive from the experience of others! In this we have greatly the advantage of the apostle, for we have the recorded experience of believers in every age, the spiritual experience of many centuries. Far back as we can look through the vista of the past, we see the way crowded with witnesses for Christ; and though of every nation and kindred and tongue under the whole heaven, they nevertheless, in reference to this, all speak the same language, all bear the same testimony. It is that Jesus is faithful. Not one has aught to say to the contrary. From one and all, through the many ages of the past, we hear uttered and echoed and reechoed, the language of the text: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." If time allowed us, I might bring before you the testimony of many a worthy of the past, in regard to the faithfulness of the Saviour, as clear and strong as that of the apostle. I can not forbear, however, to notice the bright testimony which has been left us by one who has recently gone to his heavenly home. I refer to that great and good man, Dr. James W. Alexander, whose death, while it has been his gain, is the whole Church's loss. A nobler specimen of the Christian, and the Christian minister, is seldom if ever found. He was one whose Christian character was singularly beautiful and symmetrical; no one grace cultivated and exercised at the expense of another; but all found in him and in their fullness, clustering about his heart, shining forth from his face, giving lustre to his eye and eloquence to his lips. He was one in whom the spirit of his Master burned brightly; one who gave himself wholly to his office, and honored that office by habitual gentleness, and humility, and industry, and earnestness, and perseverance; one whose very meat and drink it was to do his Father's will. Though a man of superior natural endowments and of eminent attainments, though occupying a commanding position and exerting an influence for good, which was not confined to his own people, or his own church, or his own city, but extended far and wide over all the land; yet that which distinguished him most of all, and which will embalm his memory the longest in the hearts of all who knew him, was his piety, his deep, earnest, whole-souled consecration to the

service of his heavenly Master. Called home in the rich autumn of his life, he was busy in the field and in the harvest; the sheaves lay piled around him when he fell to sleep.

And what was the testimony he gave with regard to Christ? A little while before his death he uttered this memorable language: "If the curtain should drop at this moment and I were ushered into the presence of my Maker, what would be my feelings? They would be these: First, I would prostrate myself in the dust in an unutterable sense of nothingness and guilt. Secondly, I would look up to my Redeemer with an inexpressible assurance of faith and love. There is a passage of Scripture which best expresses my present feelings, and it is this: 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' This is all I have to say."

And what more could he have said to comfort his friends and strengthen the faith of God's people throughout the world? Those few words he uttered were enough; and we feel assured he is now rejoicing in the presence of that Saviour whom he so well knew and so well loved when upon the earth.

But however clear and definite the knowledge of Christ we derive from the experience of others, that knowledge is the most valuable which we derive from our own experience; and it is that which is more especially referred to in the text. Paul felt assured, from his own experience of Christ's faithfulness, that Christ would never desert him, and that whatever he had committed to his hands was safe.

Brethren, if we have felt in our own experience the preciousness of Christ and his Gospel, that they have met our wants, and satisfied our desires, and removed our fears, can any thing persuade us that all this is a delusion? You might as well attempt to persuade the man who has been cured of some terrible malady that the physician and the medicine he prescribed are all a myth. It is to us a matter of fact, something of which we are certain.

All our immortal interests which we have committed to the Lord Jesus are perfectly secure. We are not, and never will be brought under condemnation, for there is no more condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Our evil nature, though very corrupt, though a drag upon the soul when it would soar upwards, though very hard to slay, will never have the dominion over us. Though feeble, truly infantile as we are in comparison with those gigantic powers which go about seeking whom they may devour, yet with the grace of Christ, we can and will gain the victory over them all. We are safe also as regards our bodies; for though they will be placed in the grave and will crumble away to dust, and may perhaps be scattered to the ends of the earth, they nevertheless will be watched over by Jesus, as something precious, and will

rise again, clothed with a new and wondrous beauty. When the voice of God shall shake the whole earth, and the heavens be rolled up as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat, we will be safe, in the glowing furnace of the world's destruction. There will not be even the smell of fire upon our garments. Yes, yes, thank God, we know whom we have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day—the day of death, when we hope to be with him—the day of the resurrection, when both body and soul will be glorified with him—the day of judgment, when the crown of righteousness will be received from his hands.

If what I have said be true, how unreasonable and how sinful it is for the Christian to doubt.

I see before me a mother with an infant in her arms. She gazes on it with the purest affection and the tenderest love, and it is to her something sacred, something holy. As the little one looks up smilingly into her face and places its tiny hands and arms caressingly on her breast, or throws them around her neck, I see a picture of one of the strongest of earthly loves—that which binds together and makes one, the mother and her child. Then I remember that as that mother loves her child, so God loves me—ay, far more than this, for that mother with all her love may forget her child, and through neglect may suffer it to perish; but God will never forget, never forsake me. “When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.” “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” O brethren! do any thing else, be guilty of any other sin, however great and aggravated, rather than distrust your Saviour. You may be weak, you are weak in yourselves, but there is an infinite fullness in him, enough and more than enough to supply all your wants.

From what I have said, we may learn also how important is a knowledge of Christ, not only to the impenitent, to give them faith, but also to the Christian, to increase his faith and strengthen his confidence. Whence arise our doubts and fears, but from our living more upon our frames and feelings than upon the clear and full views of the truth as it is in Jesus? If we have committed a valuable treasure to some one with whose character we are not well acquainted, every surmising, every loose report, every dark and unexplained circumstance, gives us trouble and fear, even though the deposit may be safe. And having committed our soul's treasure to Christ's keeping, how necessary to know his character, so that we may never be disturbed by doubts and fears. Let it then be our purpose to know more and more of Christ. Let us search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of him. Let us attend his house and the preaching of his word. Let us

converse much with those who have been much with him. Let us, above all, earnestly implore the influence of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to take of the things that are Christ's and show them unto his people.

The subject we have been considering is a glorious subject for the Christian, but I fear it is a subject almost unintelligible to the impenitent. You can not express your confidence in the Saviour, for you do not know him. And yet, do you not need this confidence as much as we? To you, my friends, as well as to us, there will come the hour of death; and in that solemn moment when the world and all its illusions are fading from your sight, when eternity rises before you in all its magnitude, when the curtain is drawn back from the judgment-seat, and you behold the dread realities which await you—you will be willing to give any thing, ay, every thing, to have the apostle's, the Christian's confidence, and to say with them: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Oh! if you would have the sun of your life go down, not in darkness and fear, but in beauty and hope, if you would smile when all around you are in tears, if you would have your soul bathed with the brightness and glory of heaven when your brow is cold and clammy with the sweat of death, you must have confidence in Christ as your Saviour, and must be able to rejoice in him as the God of your salvation; but remember, such confidence as this comes only from a personal and experimental knowledge of Christ, and I therefore beseech you to know Christ, whom to know aright is life eternal. You are still in the land of the living, in the land of hope; and to you this day the gospel offer is presented. In the name of my Master, authorized and commissioned by him, in all sincerity and earnestness, I say to each and every one of you: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved." "Whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."